

4. (Amended) The method of claim 18, wherein said second medium is a molecular sieve.

5. (Amended) The method of claim 18 wherein said filter is a HEPA filter.

sub C1 > 6. (Amended) A laser, comprising:

a sealed enclosure;

a plurality of optical components located in a gaseous atmosphere within said enclosure;

a gas conditioning arrangement including a desiccant medium, a medium for trapping organic vapors, and a filter for trapping particulate matter;

a pump, said pump in fluid communication with said enclosure via a first conduit and in fluid communication with said gas conditioning arrangement via a second conduit and said gas conditioning arrangement being in fluid communication with said enclosure via a third conduit;

said pump being arranged to extract gas from said enclosure via said first conduit and deliver said extracted gas to said gas-conditioning arrangement via said second conduit; and

said gas conditioning arrangement being configured such that said extracted gas delivered thereto by said pump passes, in sequence, through said desiccant medium, said organic vapor trapping medium, and said filter and is then returned to said enclosure via said third conduit and operated only in a manner intended to reduce water vapor, organic vapor and particulate matter from the gas.

b2 18. (New) A method of operating laser, said laser having a resonator, a gain medium and a source of pump light, said resonator, gain medium and source of pump light being housed in a sealed enclosure for minimizing contamination thereof, and wherein the enclosure contains a gaseous atmosphere within an enclosure, said method comprising the steps of:

(a) energizing the source of pump light to generate laser pulses;

(b) extracting gas from the atmosphere within the enclosure;